NORTH Bi NORTHWEST

Newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services

November, December, January 2005-2006 **$3.00** *Volume 18, Issue #4*

CALIFORNIA TASTER

By Janice Van Cleve

All the leaves are green
And the grapes are blue
California taster
So many wines to do

Stopped into a winery
I passed along the way
Stepped up to the bar
And asked for Viognier

Syrah, Pinot, Rousanne
And a glass of Chardonnay
California taster
On such an autumn day

It was a dangerous mission. I was alone, armed only with my Visa card. I was bound for a week long campaign of wine tasting in the Santa Ynez and Paso Robles areas of California. These areas are notorious for their exceptional Syrahs and Pinot Noirs, so I would need all the strength I could muster. I boarded the plane and strapped myself in.

Fortunately I was not going to be completely alone. At the airport I was met by my good friend and ally, Ed, who was packing a heavy duty Visa card himself. Better still, he had a keen and frequently updated knowledge of the ground and came backed by a substantial budget and an extensive data base. Ours was a dream team prepared for the rigors of the mission ahead.

We didn't have to wait long to be put to the test. A wine tasting was engaged for the very evening I arrived. It was unlike any wine tasting I had confronted before. The terrain was an outdoor patio in a strip mall outside an upscale grocery store. Long tables were arranged underneath an awning which was not needed, for the night was warm and the sky was clear. We were presented with two wine lists, neither of which agreed with the other, and six glasses of wine in no apparent order. I had to leap into the unknown as I worked my way through the samplings.

The other revelers brought bottles from their private cellars as well to share with the company. As I understood it, the evening was supposed to have a Spanish theme, but there was also a vertical case of Justin's Isosceles wine from Paso Robles making the rounds. Much fun and good cheer characterized the assemblage but as a wine tasting, this first serious contest in my California campaign resembled more a free for all slosh than an ordered operation. Nevertheless, both Ed and I did fearless deeds of consumption that night and claimed the field of victory before we left.

Our next objective was Zaca Mesa. To get there, we had to negotiate the madness of the Santa Monica freeway during rush hour (which is anytime between 4:00 am and midnight). Thanks to my trusty "blond power" we breezed through unscathed and by noontime we were enjoying a delicious soup and sauvignon blanc at Patrick's, a funky gourmet café in the tiny little hamlet of Los Olivos.

Los Olivos is really a wine tasting ambush waiting to pounce. It purports to be a quaint little tourist town with art galleries, bed & breakfasts, restaurants, and antique stores, but we were not fooled for a second. Well trained and experienced as we are in the art of sniffing out potential wine hangouts, we quickly spotted a row of wine tasting shops unobtrusively ensconced right in among the galleries. We noted these for later attention and drove on to our goal.

Zaca Mesa is a medium sized winery tucked into the dry hills up Foxen Canyon Road. The grass and scrub were crackly dry like the eastern Washington foothills except that live oaks instead of pines dotted the slopes. The mesa itself, where the vines are cultivated, is back in the hills behind the winery.

...Continued on page 4

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North Bi Northwest is the quarterly newsletter of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network. It is produced by women and is feminist in content. We feature news and events pertinent to the bisexual community, as well as creative writing and artwork.

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We welcome submissions from women and men that concern feminism, politics, sexuality, or anything of interest to bisexual women. Help define our culture! Share your histories, anger, pleasure, energy. Send us your essays, poetry, photographs, drawings, book reviews, short stories, interviews, media reports, rants, cartoons, erotica, journals, theory, conversations and letters. You're important to us and what you have to say is important to everyone.

We accept submissions on disk with hard copy (PC), typed, legibly handwritten copy or e-mail (sbwn@hotmail.com). If you send us something and we publish it, you get a free issue. Let us know what pseudonym you use, if you do not want to publish under your everyday name.

Views expressed in *North Bi Northwest* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of SBWN. Inclusion in this publication does not indicate the author's sexual orientation.

Deadline for submissions to the new issue: December 23, 2005

North Bi Northwest

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Dedicated Volunteers

SBWN
PO Box 30645
Seattle, WA
98113-0645

SBWN can always use volunteers to help with a variety of tasks. Give us a call or talk to a facilitator at a meeting.

North Bi Northwest is available by subscription as noted above.

North Bi Northwest is a publication of the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of:

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P O Box 2228
Seattle WA 98122-0228

SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of self-identified women from diverse backgrounds working to create a feminist bisexual support network. We promote, in both the heterosexual world, and in the lesbian/gay community, the understanding and acceptance of bisexuality as one of many valid sexual identities.

We regard ourselves as part of the community united against heterosexism and homophobia. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political, or economic coercion. The discriminations we face based on our gender and our sexuality are not the only forms of oppression. We recognize that oppression is non-hierarchical and that none of us is free until all of us are free. We have invested ourselves in the feminist struggle to transform our culture into one free of all forms of bigotry, hatred, and exploitation.

We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexual orientation and identity. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. We are exclusively a women's group in order to create a safe space for women's expression and leadership. We come together to affirm ourselves and our choices.

From the Editor...

Hello everyone. This issue is late due to my home computer crashing and taking until last week to get fixed. With most of the newsletter content stuck in my hard drive and unavailable we had to postpone getting the work done. I apologize for the delay.

In this issue we have another column from Pete Chevny about bisexuals being accepted or not by both the straight and gay and lesbian communities. And about our own acceptance and pride in who we are. We have a list of book recommendations that came out of a book meeting we had in August. It was one of our larger meetings and the variety of the books brought and talked about was quite refreshing. Some of them relate to bisexuality and some were just read and enjoyed by bisexuals. We have a short story from one of our now distant members. Diana has moved to Florida but she sent us one of her life observations. We honour another of our long-term volunteers, Roberta Gregory who has contributed artwork to the newsletter for years.

SBWN meetings have been well-attended. We had a fun Erotic writing workshop and a great Art of Seduction meeting. See the calendar for our upcoming schedule of meetings.

The war rages on, more soldiers and people in Iraq are killed every day. Our congress is busy cutting funds for low income help programs while at the same time continuing to cut taxes for our wealthiest citizens supposedly in the name of 'balancing' our enormous budget. And to help pay for Katrina damage. I don't understand why there isn't a huge groundswell of complaints and indignation from the people. The oil companies make record profits while the congress votes them even more money in a terrible energy bill.

In California the legislature approved same sex marriage and the governor promptly vetoed it. More states passed anti same-sex marriage legislation. What are people so afraid of? Massachusetts hasn't collapsed into chaos after a year of legal same sex marriage.

It's been a interesting several months for me. My job assignment is ending just before turkey day and I am looking for a new job after more than five years. When I first went to work at this company I expected to be there several months but I ended up going back each time my assignments ended. Now it is almost over and I am feeling very sad. I have been to a series of going away parties (mine along with two fellow workers is coming up soon) and said goodbye to many others without a party. I have also been teaching a man from India my job which is a strange task all of its own. We have done a 'team building' event with the foreign workers, riding the Washington Dinner Train for a mystery night. The 'murderer' turned out to be one of our foreign workers. I was impressed at how they manage to work in encounters with many of the people attending. We filled out questionnaires before we got on the train so the actors had some personal details to work with about each of us. I ended up in custody of the detective's half-eaten Krispy Kreme. He handed it to me and told me to keep it safe. I left it on the table when we got off to tour the Columbia Winery and it was gone when we returned to the train. Luckily I was not charged for absconding with the donut.

I have also had to cope with two trips to the emergency room with my son. The first time he had a severe headache and was treated to an MRI which showed everything was normal. The second time he went on a date to an ice-skating rink and fell down and split his chin. That one resulted in ten or more stitches and a scar he will live with the rest of his life.
Have a great holiday season.

Cyprienne

Special Notice to Contributors

SBWN has entered into an agreement with EBSCO to have North-Bi-Northwest offered by subscription electronically. If you are a contributor of content, please be aware that future issues of North-Bi-Northwest will be available online.

Ed is a member of the Zaca Mesa club, so when we arrived, the owner welcomed us warmly and the wine maker gave us the full tour. This was quite an honor seeing as they were in the middle of crush and every worker was going full tilt to get the harvest in and processed. I nibbled some syrah grapes in the bins before we went inside to sample early processing in the tanks. One tank after another we sampled, including a brand new viogniernot five days into its fermentation that tasted like a cool apricot smoothie.

This is the kind of work where discipline counts. It is tempting to follow up the swirling and sniffing and sipping and savoring with swallowing. Mais non! C'est ne pas advisable! If you have any hope of surviving an extended ordeal like this in a winery, you must not swallow. You must savor enough to get the idea of the wine and then spit, dumping the remainder in the drain in the floor. If you don't, you may find yourself on the floor before too long.

We emerged grateful for the tour and congratulated ourselves on a job well done. But it was not done. The owner put us in front of the tasting table, laid out a rather nice platter of cheeses and crackers, and plunged us back into the fray, this time with a round of reds. We bravely managed through them all and in the end made friends with all the other customers and bought some wine to go. . ., that is, to go back to those wine shops in Los Olivos. After all, now we had to compare the varietals we tasted at Zaca Mesa against similar varietals from these wineries. It was the Rousanne, a rare white grape that is only now coming into its own in these parts, that was our chief object of interest. After three more of these, plus an odd assortment of wines, we concluded that Andrew Murray made the best Rousanne.

Though evening was now upon us and we had already tested a prodigious quantity of fermented grape, our work was not yet finished. After securing a base of operations in a motel in Solvang and a short swim in the pool, we decided on dinner at the Hitching Post, a restaurant made famous in the movie "Sideways". I celebrated the successful completion – and survival – of our first full day of wine tasting with filet mignon and breast of duck and a bottle of cabernet sauvignon. I could see already that this was going to be a strenuous week!

Day two was the supreme test. Some 50 or 60 wineries set up tasting booths for a harvest festival at a remote winery called Rancho Sisquoc. Interspersed among the tables of liquid exercise were tasty food offerings of salmon and sausage, cheese and chocolate, salad and steak, breads and nuts and all variety of other treats. The day was bright and cool and the wine flowed freely. This was heavy duty action. Glass after glass we did our duty, reviving our palettes from time to time with water and striving to keep our sensitivities alert. I admit that I let discipline slip more than once and succumbed to the temptation to drink down these lovely beverages. Yet I did keep my wits about me enough to takes notes that became more abbreviated as the day wore on. I am proud to say that we accomplished our mission admirably that day, but it took its toll. I had to drive us back and at dinner that night I could only manage one glass of chardonnay with the halibut.

We paced ourselves for day three. To warm up we did a vertical tasting of old sauvignon blancs which was quite interesting and then contrasted Oregon pinot noirs to those from California. This was light exercise for what was to follow – the Andrew Murray winery. Ed and I first discovered Andrew Murray syrah late one night in a small restaurant on the outskirts of Monterey some five years ago. It was a surprise at first sip and astounding after the first glass. So it is no surprise that his winery was one of the most important targets of our entire week.

Nor did Andrew Murray disappoint. We went from bottle to bottle, glass by glass, savoring every delicious drop. Then we went back again, this time to pair the wines with the spicy sausages. We took photos with Andrew and he gave us a mini tour, outlining his plans for landscaping and possible future wine experiments. Fortunately Ed is a member here, too, so we enjoyed deep discounts along with fine wines and a brilliantly warm sunny day. That night we celebrated our magnificent success and the completion of the Santa Ynez portion of our campaign with huge steaks and a big zinfandel at Patrick's.

Next: Paso Robles.

Janice Van Cleve is a writer whose first introduction to wines was, embarrassing as it is to admit, bottles of cheap muscatel while typing up overdue term papers in college. Copyright 2005.

Bi Women's Discussion Group, August 21, 2005

Sheri's Note: Once again this August I had the opportunity to facilitate one of my more favorite meetings. We all brought some of either our most favorite books of all time or great books we had read recently and were dying to share. There were so many books covering the table we couldn't even begin to talk about all of them. Two people had brought Wicked, but other than that there were no duplications. It was great fun to sit around and share things we enjoyed. Lots of loaning and borrowing and donating to the LGBT Center went on that evening. What follows is a list of most of the books we brought to share that night. If you are looking for gift ideas, try these out. We only brought books someone in the group loved.

Sheri—*Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate* by George Lakoff:

Examines how the Right has learned to use messages to change people's views more effectively than Progressives have. The power of terms to frame the discussion.

Sheri—*Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* by Azar Nafisi:

A teacher in Tehran had seven female students read Western literature in her home. They saw their lives in a new way. "An eye-opening book, and a great female-centered book."

Lisa—*Time Traveler's Wife* by Audrey Niffenegger

A fast-paced romance about a man born with a genetic "problem" that causes him to time travel in times of stress to different moments in his own life, past and future. He is unable to control it and always arrives at the new time naked and nauseous. It is told poignantly from the perspective of both the main character and his wife.

Lisa—*My Sister's Keeper* by Jody Piccoult

A fictionalized account about a very real issue: the book begins with a 14 year old girl arriving at an attorney's office to request medical emancipation from her parents. She was conceived to be a bone-marrow donor for her older sister, who had leukemia. Throughout her life her family has called upon her body to help her sister, and she's had enough. The novel is told from the perspective of all family members, who clearly love one another and are each struggling, in their way, with this painful situation. Includes a minor character who is a lesbian.

Cyprienne—*The Rainbow Goblins* by Ul de Rico:

The story of trolls who want to steal the rainbow. A "dark" picture book.

Cyprienne—*The Family of Man*:

Based on a traveling exhibit of 503 pictures from 68 countries, created by Edward Steichen for the Museum of Modern Art in New York, stunning black and white photography, with literary quotes. Covers the range of life.

Kirsten—*The Case of the Not-So-Nice Nurse* by Mabel Maney.

A lesbian Nancy Drew parody. (Has two sequels.)

MABEL MANEY
NOT-SO-NICE NURSE

Shannon—*Innocents Abroad: New Fantasy Stories* by Gene Wolfe:

"Wolfe is our Melville"—Ursula K. Le Guin

Shannon—*The Resurrection of Mary Magdalene: Legends, Apocrypha, and the Christian Testament* by Jane Shaberg:

A strong feminist perspective on the early Christian church, especially Mary Magdalene. Influenced by Virginia Woolf.

Robyn—*Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* by Gregory Maguire:

A completely new political perspective on Oz. "It will blow your mind."

Robyn—*Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides:

Calliope is a hermaphrodite who doesn't fit into her traditional Greek Orthodox family.

Robyn—*The Virgin Suicides* by Jeffrey Eugenides: "Very dark but awesome"

Tracy—The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities by Dossie Easton and Catherine A. Liszt:

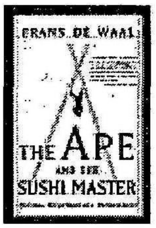
Reclaiming the term "slut" for people who acknowledge that sex is good. Shows universal truths that apply to different relationship styles. Offers practical advice, less theoretical than Love Without Limits.

Emily—*Jitterbug Perfume* by Tom Robbins:

A medieval king discovers how to prolong life. "Very expressive, colorful writing."

Emily—*The Ape and the Sushi Master: Cultural Reflections of a Primatologist* by Frans de Waal:

Makes an argument for culture in animals. Defines "culture" as the ability to learn from observation of your elders and your peers.



Christina—*She* by Minnie Bruce Pratt:

A short collection of poetry and essays. Growing up gay in the 1950s, being femme in the gay community.

Christina—*White Tea* by Sadie Smith:

Characters of different backgrounds and ages are woven together. "A great book!"

Kim—*Whales on Stilts!* By M. T. Anderson:

A children's book with a dry sense of humor and a plot about whales who are bent on world domination.

Sheri—*Parenting from the Inside Out* by Dan Siegel and Mary Hartzell:

Robyn—*Running with Scissors* by Augusten Burroughs

Shannon—*Transliberation: Beyond Pink or Blue* by Leslie Feinberg:

A collection of speeches on transgender issues

TRANS LIBERATION

Robyn—*House of Sand and Fog* by Andre Dubus III:

A modern day tragedy involving cultural misunderstandings, property ownership, poor impulse control, set in California.

Robyn—*Bastard of Carolina* by Dorothy Allison:

First in a series. About abuse, but empowering.

Robyn—*White Oleander* by Janet Fitch:

Depressing but good.

Sheri—*Wifey* by Judy Blume.

"Not just about sex, but about understanding yourself as a woman and gender roles."

Sheri—*Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich:

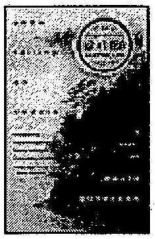
Examines class issues.

Sheri—*The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* by Michael Chabon:

Has queer characters, Pulitzer Prize winner.

Sheri—*Snow Falling on Cedars* by David Guterson:

Set in the San Juan Islands.



Cyprienne—*Found Goddesses Asphalta to Viscera* as revealed to Morgan Grey and Julia Penelope, Illustrations by Alison Bechdel:

Joke book about made-up goddesses, e.g. Asphalta.

Cyprienne—*Getting Bi: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World* edited by Robin Ochs & Sarah E. Rowley:

GETTING BI
VOICES OF BISEXUALS AROUND THE WORLD

Represents different views from bisexual people around the world. "A zillion little stories."

Cyprienne—*When Birth Control Fails* by Susann Gage:

From the 1970s but still has some useful information.

Cyprienne—*Birth Control Handbook Medicine for the People* editors Donna Cherniak and Allan Feingold:

Early 1970s look at politics of birth control and sterilization.

Cyprienne—*Our Bodies, Ourselves* by Boston Women's Health Book Collective:

First big edition, 1973, for the first time women writing about our bodies. "In America They Call Us Dykes" is the only essay that mentions bisexuality, and not positively. *The New Our Bodies, Ourselves*, a later edition that Cyprienne and other bisexual women had input on, had a short section on bisexuality.

Cyprienne—Georgia O'Keefe bio by?:

Bisexual artist who painted in "ways that women weren't allowed to paint."

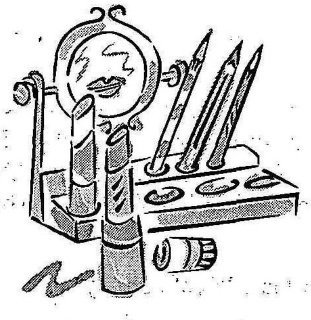
Stray Kisses
By Diana

My partner and I relocated to where we rented an apartment with two bathrooms. I thought I struck gold! We doubled the shower curtains and divided up the storage supplies. She got the first aid drawer and I got the cold meds. Six months of glorious room in my own bathroom.

Until six months ago my entire life was spent sharing one bathroom per household. For seven years I commingled my cleaning rituals with my partner in a small two bedroom one bathroom house. We shared private shower thoughts about nails, skin and shaving. We yelled "what?" over the ceiling fan and realized we were talking to no one when the other left the room without announcement or permission. How rude! We flung open the curtain when we heard noise and let the dog lick the water from our legs. We turned off the blow dryer to finish a thought out loud and occasionally one of us actually closed the bathroom door for mystery maintenance. It was an intimate time where you didn't hide your disappointments about flab, fluff, folds and frizz. We contorted ourselves and balanced ourselves on the sink to look at odd places the high mirror would display. I marveled at how she could put one foot on the sink and the other on the ground. I was lucky to reach the side of the tub when I wanted to examine my knee, shin or foot.

Today I showered in her bathroom to allow my curtain to dry for movement to a new house. She was gone for the day and I arrived holding my shampoo and conditioner. That's when I realized I didn't recognize most of her products. Our bodies, skin, hair and preferences are all different. Our choice in hair spray, mousse and styling products are all different. A vast array of skin scrubbing, feet scrubbing, buff puff type things come in multitudes of colors and sizes. Our skin type requires nothing or everything to protect, moisturize, and clean. Our teeth preferences are similar only in that we both use a Sonicare. Toothpaste, dental floss and Listerine OH MY! The only product I recognized was Dove fragrance free soap.

My departure from her bathroom left me missing that important intimate and very personal time. While the space was nice the morning routine became something to take care of instead of something to share. Over the next week we will again share the same bathroom and I look forward to all those stray kisses we shared as we asked the other to pass the lotion.



Valued Volunteers

Our Valued Volunteers column is our place to give some well-deserved recognition to the wonderful women who help keep SBWN running. This quarter's volunteer profile is on Roberta Gregory. Roberta's artwork has graced the pages of North Bi Northwest many times over the years, including many pieces done specifically for us. Thanks for donating your time and creativity to SBWN and North Bi Northwest, Roberta! Your work is much appreciated.

How long have you been involved with SBWN?
Since perhaps 1991 or so… soon after I moved to Seattle.

How did you find out about SBWN?
You know, it has been so long, I almost forget. I think I saw an ad somewhere. It met in Wallingford near the Honey Bear and I lived nearby.

What job do you volunteer for at SBWN?
I do artwork for North Bi Northwest.

Have you done other volunteer positions for SBWN?
Nothing really formal. Actually, it now meets near where I live in Capitol Hill and I still have trouble making it to meetings.

Have you done volunteer positions with other groups?
I don't usually volunteer a lot. I am so busy with my life, trying to make a halfway-decent living from an artistic lifestyle, that I don't have much 'free' time.

Why do you volunteer? With SBWN? With any other group?
I wish I had more time to volunteer. I always wonder what it is like to have a life where you work a set number of hours somewhere and then you have free time. I can always sit down at the drawing board and turn out a piece of art, especially when someone has a pretty good idea of what they want!!

What are your interests? Hobbies?
I have almost too MANY interests! Everything in the world, really. I especially like to write, and am studying hypnotherapy, which I hope to practice professionally sometime in the future. I like to do artwork, too and wish I had more time to be creative just for the joy of creativity…

How old are you?
Old enough to know better… fifty-two!

What is your real world job or profession? How do you make a living?
Well, I must be making a living because I am still here. At the moment I have a part time on-call job working at McCaw Hall for the Opera. I am doing a few paying jobs: just did a few book illustrations for a friend, designing an email-cartoon promoting mammograms, and writing and drawing a short story for an anthology called Sexy Chix. I just had a book out from Fantagraphics, Life's a Bitch. I am working on crafts pieces that I am supposed to sell to a friend. I will be teaching

a class at Richard Hugo House this fall. None of this brings in huge amounts of money, but I am able to do it and work fairly flexible hours. But on the down side, it makes it as though I am permanently punched into the time clock since there is always something that needs to be done that I am behind in. It is just a permanent situation.

Do you have a family you want to tell us about? Husband, wife, partner, children, mother, father, siblings, cat, dog?
I currently live with: my live-in partner Bruce Taylor, who writes Fantasy and Magical Realism, my diabetic kitty Pushkin and Bruce's kitty Purrzac.

Where did you grow up?
Southern California.

How long have you lived in the Seattle area?
I moved here in 1989. I really like it here!!

Do you identify as bisexual? When did you know?
I am one of those pesky, annoying people who really REALLY does not like labels, but most other people seem to get tweaky if they do not know how to categorize you.

Anything else you would like the readership to know about you?
Oh my gosh, there is just so much going on with me! Even I can't keep up with it. Let North Bi's readers know they can visit me on my website, Robertagregory.com, and find out about my comics, books, appearances at local conventions, classes I am offering and such!

Volunteers:

Announcement List – Shannon
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Facilitator Coordinator – Lisa H
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Kristina
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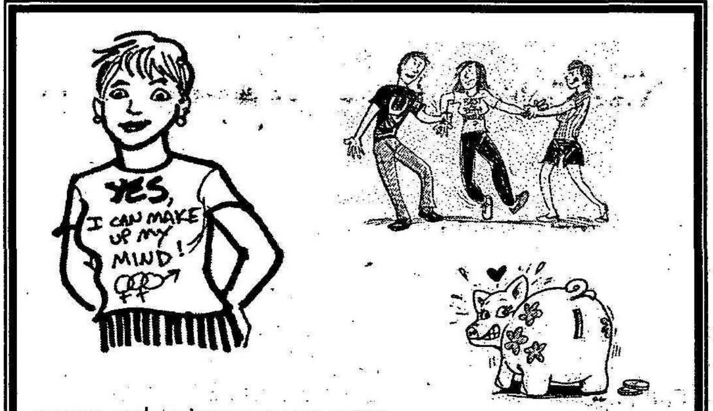
Lisa L
Sheri

Volunteer Needs:

Facilitators
Pride Booth Coordinator (Never hurts to start early!)
Pride March Coordinator
Marketing

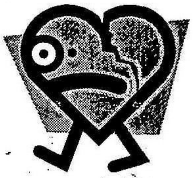

YES, I CAN MAKE UP MY MIND!

www.robertagregory.com

Unbroken

By Peter A. Chvany

Not long ago, the Boston Globe published a story on bisexuality. Timed to coincide with the second annual International Celebrate Bisexuality Day (September 23rd, if you want to mark your calendar for 2001), it discussed the difficulties bisexuals have faced from the straight mainstream (like the spate of "bisexuals are the Typhoid Marys of AIDS" articles in the late 1980s), and within GLBT communities. One quotation, from the editor of a major gay-press publication, stuck with me long after I forgot the rest. He noted that for a long time he resisted including bi content in his paper because he felt people were using the bisexual label to hide. His (former) attitude was that bisexuality was "a way of telling the straight world you're only half broken."



I'm glad he doesn't feel that way now, but he's not the only one who ever did. That brief sentence reveals one of the most tragic tensions between gay men and lesbians on one hand, and bisexuals on the other. We seem to get stuck arguing over which of us is less "broken." This is both ugly and revealing, since it means we've accepted the idea that there IS something wrong with us. So much for the pride we supposedly feel in ourselves.

I don't think I've ever considered my sexuality superior to that of gay men or lesbians. If anything, I've had to struggle to accept myself knowing that bisexuality is so widely considered a cop-out for people who can't handle being genuinely gay. I never felt HALF broken: I felt more damaged than everyone else until I learned I was neither alone nor crazy in my bi difference, and started seeing my sexuality as good. Not better than someone else's: just good in and of itself.

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Bi Women Buy Things!

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Business Card	$10 per issue / $30 per year
One-quarter Page	$15 per issue / $45 per year
Three-quarter Page	$20 per issue / $60 per year
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Contact North Bi Northwest

I'm not perfect about that self-acceptance, even now, but it's the only thing that really works. Without it, I would refuse the support and acceptance I've gotten from others. One reason I spend so much time writing and talking about my sexuality is simply to increase the chances that somebody like me won't have to struggle quite so hard next time. But it will still be up to them to learn to love themselves.

As far as using bisexual identity to appease straights goes, I know some straights do see bisexuality as more acceptable. But the worst reactions I've gotten to my sexuality have been from straights who could understand being gay, if that's what you had to be, but couldn't understand "waffling" about it. You should have heard my father's scorn when I first came out to him several years ago: "if you're gay, be that, but don't get stuck halfway." He didn't mean that bisexuals are only half broken. He meant that at least homosexuality was honest, even if he didn't like it, but bisexuality was dishonest and compromised. (Fortunately, we're on better terms now, though he frequently lets me know that his gay students agree I must really be gay too. People love their certainty that someone ELSE is in denial!)

On the other hand, the straights who seem most genuinely accepting of my sexuality are those who think gay men and lesbians are perfectly fine too. If bisexuality doesn't freak them out, it isn't because they see it as half as good as themselves, it's because they accept all forms of adult sexuality and don't sweat the bisexual differences.

I'm not even sure they truly believe in bisexuals. Maybe they just see us as lesbians or gay men who experiment on the side. The point is, it doesn't bother them if we do, and they're polite enough to call us by the label we ask them to use.

So this idea that straights see bisexuals as only "half broken," and that bisexuals exploit that fact, is closer to what psychologists call a projection--a belief about oneself so frightening it has to be ascribed to someone else--than it is to fact. The longer I'm out, the more I realize how many lesbians and gay men still struggle with the fear that we ARE all damaged.

This realization puts me in a strange position. I don't like being targeted for my supposed waffling, self-hatred, or unreliability, when the fear is really someone else's. But having confronted so much of my own certainty that I was damaged goods, I can't pretend I don't understand.

Originally published in The Slant as "Arguing over which of us is less 'broken,'" February 2001, Page 22, 27.
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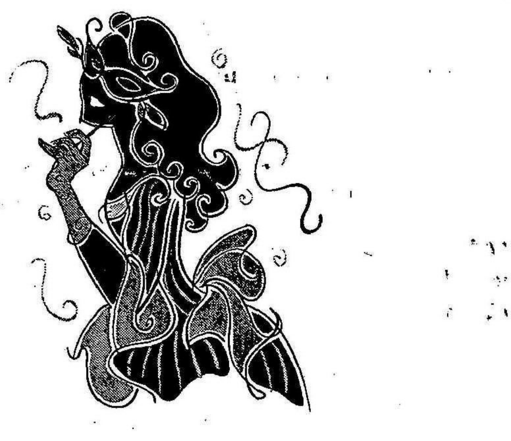
Inside Outsider

Some friends who live in Berkeley came up for a science fiction convention over the weekend. Due to tight scheduling, I was invited to come down and meet with them at their hotel, the Hilton in SeaTac, for a short visit.

The hotel parking lot was full, a sign directed me into a pay lot next door that is primarily used for airport parking. They were a bit surprised that I was only coming in to park for a few hours until I mentioned that I was visiting someone at the Hilton.

When I received the invitation to meet via email I went to the web site for the science fiction convention and read up on the planned event. I knew I would be visiting my friends at a con. By the time I had driven down from Redmond and was parking, I had put the con aspect to the back of my mind.

There were no outwardly visible signs that a science fiction convention (or any other convention) was in progress. I asked a hotel employee for directions to the room my friends were staying in. As I walked I began to see signs that something was happening. I passed through a lobby area lined on either side by tables covered with literature with people milling about in casual clothing and all sporting that ubiquitous rectangle of plastic hanging from their necks proclaiming their names and naming the con. I noticed that technology was catching up with the con world and the badges were made of plastic and resembled a credit card in size. And many of these had attachments from party attendance or award ribbons hanging below. I began to feel very strange striding through the throng naked without an official badge. I reminded myself that I was on my way to visit friends and had every right to be there in the hotel's public spaces. My eyes wandered the crowd searching for the costumed attendees I so enjoy seeing at cons. Finally I spotted some teenage girls sporting furry spiked ears emerging from the top of their heads.



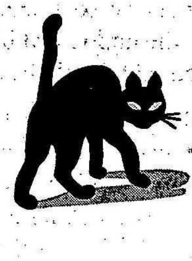
I located an elevator and proceeded to the third floor and knocked on one door in a hallway of identical doors. Some voices beyond the door were speaking, one said 'That must be Cyprienne" so I called out, "yes, it is" and then the door opened. It was a typical bland hotel room scattered with open suitcases spilling forth clothes. One bed was occupied with two people intertwined and some new looking books. My friend slipped on some shoes and grabbed a jacket. I asked to use the bathroom but was discouraged from doing so as there had been some trouble with the plumbing. My friend and I used the stairs to return to the lobby and went in search of the advertised coffee bar, which turned out to be located in the main entrance lobby. We got cups of coffee and sat down at a small round table to talk. I was continually distracted by the parade of costumed passers by. There were many people in fancy clothes of other eras and some dressed as aliens of various sorts.

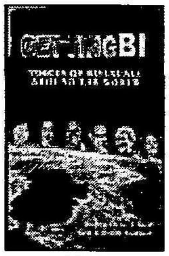
I saw a couple of Klingons, some Trek personnel, some animals, many beards, several men in kilts and some interesting tattoos. I had a view of the main door and through the window where shuttle buses kept pulling up and disgorging clumps of people. Occasionally there would be more ordinary looking hotel patrons scattered amongst the obvious conventioneers.

One man came through the lobby and stopped at our table to talk to my friend. They made the usual con conversation, "I didn't know you were here, are you staying in this hotel, how long have you been here, I can't believe you are here and I haven't run into you until now, don't forget to say hi to your partner, are you going to the xyz party tonight, let's get together later." As time passed we were joined by several people and I began to bounce back and forth between feeling a part of the con experience and feeling totally alienated and detached from the scene enfolding in my lap. Plans to go to dinner and meet up later were sealed. We started to say our farewells, hugs were exchanged and the attention of my friends rapidly turned toward the pursuit of food. I walked back to the parking lot, handed in my tag, presented my plastic card and signed the paper slip. My car appeared in front of me and I climbed in and adjusted the seat and started driving towards the freeway.

My mind was whirring with emotions, sadness at the sweetness of sharing only a brief visit with my friends, alienated by not being a part of the con and the secret society of science fiction fandom blossoming briefly in SeaTac, the strangeness of being at a con in my own 'hometown' area (I usually associate attending a con with being far away from my living venue), pride at knowing that I was finally familiar enough with the geography of the area that I needn't consult a map to find the nearest freeway entrance, more sadness at being alone again and on my way home to an empty house (except for B' Elanna, my half Klingon black cat).

Cyprienne
5 September 2005





Getting Bi Voices of Bisexuals around the World

Editors: Robyn Ochs and Sarah E. Rowley
Bisexual Resource Center, Boston, Massachusetts
www.biresource.org

Book Review by Cyprienne

There is a very diverse range of voices in this compilation of personal stories. Robyn and Sarah worked hard to find contributors both young and old, from many different countries and cultures around the world. Read the introduction to find out how.

The book has the stories grouped under chapter titles like "What is Bisexuality?", "Why Bi?", "Life Stories," and "Crossing Lines." It also includes some articles like "Bisexual Etiquette" and "How to Spell Bisexual," and reference sections for books both fiction and non-, online resources, organizations, and more. It's a comprehensive window into the personal lives of people who proudly use the label 'bisexual' and those whose behavior might be considered bisexual, though they don't use or identify with the label.

There are familiar names: Carol Queen, Lorraine Hutchins, Lani Ka'ahumanu, Bill Burleson and Antonio Ferrera. And some local people known to us at SBWN: Ann Tweedy and Toni.

I was impressed with the contrasts between people who are able to live openly as bisexuals and those who must hide in the closet for fear of terrible consequences. The range of experiences is so broad, open acceptance, severe repression, and everything in between. Voices come from rurally situated people and city dwellers, people who are a part of large bisexual communities and those who have no one to talk to about bisexuality in their everyday lives.

The chapter on coming out is particularly poignant. The story from Amber Terrell is in the form of a letter to her parents and talks about how hard Amber resisted admitting to herself that she was 'different' and kept it hidden from her mother and father because of the strong message she received at home. This letter speaks of her need to live openly and honestly as the bisexual woman that she is. She says:

"I know we are finally a family of 'no secrets' now that I am being honest with myself. I hope this does not change your opinion of me.... I want to remind you that I am still your little girl, that you still know me, and that I have not changed. It is just now you know a little more about me."

Here are more quotes from the chapter on coming out.

Nancy Leclerc "Hiding our bisexual natures from our children merely helps propagate the notion that bisexuality is an anomaly, or a perversion that should be avoided."

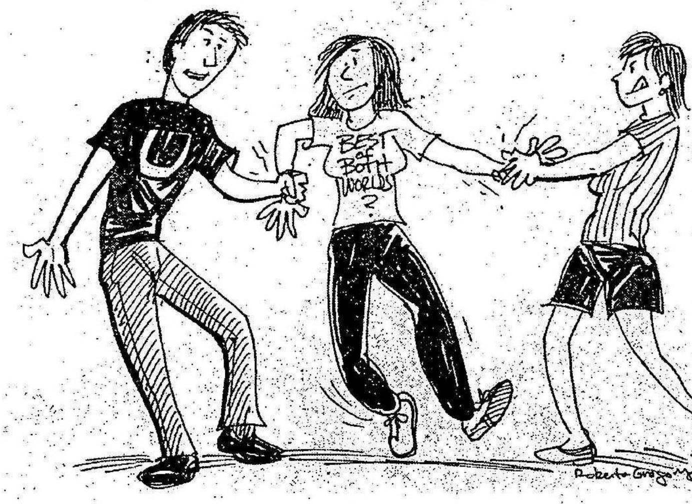
Simone Pantaleo "I call myself bisexual because I feel the capacity to love both sexes as much as members of a heterosexual couple love each other. It's not about 'swinging both ways' or 'being promiscuous': it's about my capacity to love both sexes equally and fully. It's that simple to me."

Greg Rodgers "My gay brother believes that there are two groups, heterosexual and homosexual, and that it isn't possible to exist in 'both worlds'. He believes that being bi is like being gay but being in the closet."

Andrea Toselli "I don't like the words heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual because they define you according to your relation to someone."

Saraswati Bryer-Bass "I could either like girls or boys. The problem was that I seemed to like both and now I had to prioritize and choose."

This book will make you laugh, cry, get angry, and hopefully open your eyes to the wide range of bisexual experiences.



www.robertagregory.com

Our ongoing PRIDE!

The gay pride celebration may only be once a year, but our pride in ourselves and our community is year-round.

Here's a collage of photos taken at Seattle Pride 2005.

REAL FEMINISTS CLAIM THEIR OWN DESIRE
SUNSHINE GET YOUR DAD TO PFLAG
Seattle Bisexual Women's Network
DRIVE OUT THE BUSH REGIME
BINET

Saucy Dish!
All things sensual and sexy!

Saucy Dish is on temporary hiatus! Saucy is very busy right now with her many activities in the sex-positive community Thanks for all that you give to the community, Saucy! We eagerly anticipate more of your excellent advice.

This column offers sexuality education and insight into sex positive culture. Information contained within will be bold, opinioned and based on experience and research. Please ask questions about safer sex, our bodies, pleasure, relationships, sexual exploration, sex toys, sexy wear, flirting and more…

Send letters to SBWN Attn: Saucy Dish POB 30645, Greenwood Station, Seattle, WA 98113-0645 or email your questions to: saucydish@hotmail.com

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Comments After Meetings

18 September 2005 Open Rap

"Broad discussion, lots of different views, very refreshing – Viva la difference."

"It was great to meet y'all!"

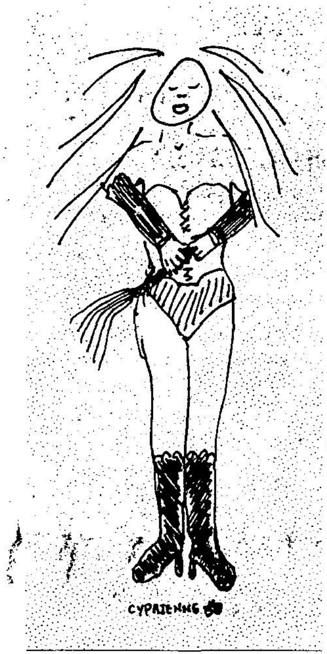
"Thanks for a chance to speak with some broad-minded broads!"

"I am really glad that I came, it was a great meeting. I hope that we will continue learning from each other."

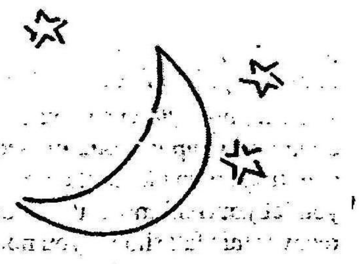
"Open night was great, it was more of a conversation than normal, all over territory of interest."

SBWN To Disconnect Voicemail

After lengthy discussion about SBWN's financial and volunteer resources and usage of our various communication avenues, the SBWN Advisory Group voted to disconnect its voicemail line after January 1, 2006. The decision was made at the Oct. 2 Business Meeting. SBWN typically receives less than a half-dozen voicemail messages per year. The voicemail line costs $20 per month, and requires a volunteer to check it regularly, return calls, and pass along messages. Since SBWN has a very limited financial and volunteer pool, members of the SBWN Advisory Group considered whether the group was accessible via other means. Communication with the public and among members primarily occurs via the SBWN email address and website, as well as by mail via the post office box. Since the meeting location is no longer confidential (for many years attendees could find the meetings only by receiving a call back), interested parties can also just show up at the LGBT Center on either the first or third Sunday of the month to learn more about us. Although the SBWN Advisory Group wishes the organization had the resources to maintain avenues of communication to suit the means of anyone trying to contact us, as an organization we must prioritize our limited resources. We regret any inconvenience this may cause and hope to continue hearing from you by email, mail, or in person.



The "WuWu" Page



...for entertainment only...

Horoscopes

Sagittarius Nov 22 to Dec 21

Key word: Openness – It is your trademark to be the most open minded in your circle of friends but if you were to expand your circle, as you no doubt will do, you'll find that you have been neglecting someone through a prejudice forced upon you. Live up to your reputation and open up again. You'll be happy you did.

- Your focus on family is shifting to a broader definition. You are beginning to include those you love, and exclude some who are blood yet non-responsive. You'll be surprised at how smooth a transition this will be. You are seeking, and discovering, balance in relationships based upon energetic value. All is "working out for the best." Trust your heart.

Capricorn Dec 21-Jan 20

Key word: Love – Capricorn, you love so well when it comes to others. It is important that you insist you are loved with the same intent by others and yourself.

-There is nothing mysterious about the changes that are occurring in your life over this season and into the next. If you allow yourself to be calm and observe the actions of others, you will clearly see their motives and in turn, you will understand their expectations of you. Simple.

Aquarius Jan 20 to Feb 18

Key word: Delight – the more you appreciate that which you find delight in, the more you will find yourself delighted. Don't fake it. You're only cheating yourself when you do.

-You are rediscovering a soul mate currently. While you revel in the thrill of feeling the familiar energy. Please, don't forget that you are not the only one involved. Honor boundaries and step softly to avoid repeating a past disaster.

Pisces Feb 18 to Mar 20

Key word: Power - Power is an unfamiliar concept to you. True you have experienced being taken advantage of by those in the position of power. But you have never truly experienced being in that position yourself. Do not fear becoming corrupted by it. You are much too compassionate and empathetic.

- The work you are doing at this time will show a steady and increasing profit. You've earned it. Keep going!

Aries Mar 20 to April 20

Key word: Humor – You might want to consider a brighter side to humor when cracking jokes. You're beginning to bring people down with your cynical sensibilities. lighten up your material and you will become happier overall.

-It always seems like it is the other guy who is getting all the breaks. What you're forgetting is that "the other guy" has not forgotten you. In that fact lies your break. Pay attention to the true gifts in your life.

Taurus Apr 20 to May 21

Key word: Surrender –It is so hard for you to just let go and trust in anything. You may be taken a few times but there is more joy in trusting than in being shut off from the world.

-You still are keeping up the walls. You are missing so much this holiday season by doing so. There are many who are waiting to show love to you if you would let them in.

Gemini May 21 to Jun 21

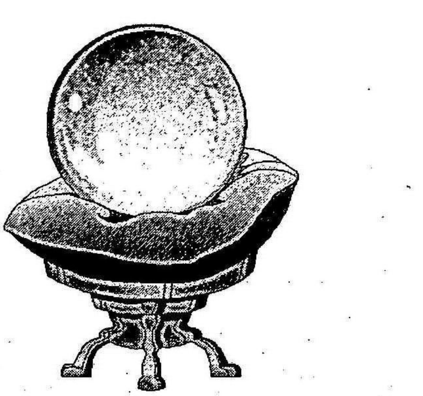
Key word: Play–This is just the time for you to let your hair down and jump into the fun and games. You will glow. Friends and co-workers will see a side of you that will earn their admiration.

- You're like a dam waiting to burst. You can't hold it in any longer. Company parties and outings with friends are going to be hard to resist. Don't apologize the next day for uncharacteristic behavior. Allow the change to happen. It's the best thing that can possibly happen. Enjoy your life.

Cancer Jun 21 to Jul 22

Key word: Honesty- you're honest to a point. Consider how dishonest you are when you leave out parts of the truth. You only fool yourself. You hurt yourself too. Careful.

-You are going to wish you'd done it differently soon if you do not clean up your act immediately. There are certain people counting on you to do the right thing. If you let them down you let yourself down. It will take a long time for you to recover this fall should you not heed the warnings around you.



Leo Jul 22 to Aug 23

Key word: Efficiency – You are efficient. This is good but you must understand why you do things the way you do in order for this efficiency to serve you well as a coping skill.

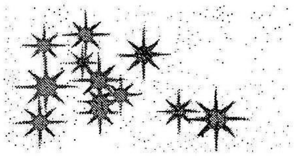
-You will achieve the goals you are reaching for with much less stress and effort than you expect. So, take some time to smell the roses and love more deeply. That is what it is all about…and you know that.

Send your questions for our psychic to **cowbone@eathlink.com**

Virgo Aug 23 to Sept 23

Key word: Flexibility – You are stretching and growing in ways you'd never expected. You can't stop the changes that are happening in and around you. Trust that the universe will keep you in line and you will do well.

-You are becoming aware of your own karma. There is some sadness that comes with understanding your past and energetic transformation into the you of the present and future. Let that feeling pass over you quickly. If you do not dwell on it you will make quick work of your karma and be well on your way to very green pastures. Yippiee!!



Libra Sept 23 to Oct 23

Key word: Balance –Balance is your thing, yet you feel so out of balance these days. Welcome to the way the other 11 signs live. Yeah, yeah, you're not used to it. It will pass within a couple of months. But learn from this feeling while it lasts. It will be a valuable lesson.

-You will watch an opportunity pass with great distress this month; thinking that you have just missed something big. It isn't. Yours is coming on its way and will arrive when you are ready.

Neptune
Studios and Gallery.
Visit the Gallery Site:
www.neptunestudio.com
We are currently seeking artists to show their work on our web-site
Professional FINE ART artists are welcome to submit their work for review.
For details contact Jan at cowbone@earthlink.net

Scorpio Oct 23 to Nov 22

Key word: Birth-You may understand the process of birth, but try to study the impact of birth over the next few months.

-Someone in a position of authority over you will look very favorably upon you this season. Look in this kindness for your long-term future. You will see a gem that you can enterprise upon for years to come.

Calendar

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network offers support and discussion groups at the Seattle LGBT Community Center. For schedule updates and other events, please visit our website:

http://www.geocities.com/sbwn/.

SBWN group meetings are typically held on the first and third Sunday of each month from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. When attending support group meetings, please refrain from wearing perfumes or other scented products for the comfort of all.

Schedule of Meetings

Sunday, November 6: Erotic Writing Workshop. Put your sexy thoughts into words on paper...visual aides welcome!

Sunday November 20: Giving Back—Volunteerism and Community Activism. Discuss volunteering and ways to give back to the community.

Sunday, December 4: Growing Up Queer. Share thoughts and experiences about crushes, confusion and growing up different (or not so different).

Sunday December 18: Holiday Survival. Discuss strategies for dealing with family issues, partners (or lack of a partner), social obligations, and other stresses and joys of the holiday season.

Sunday, January 1: No meeting.

Sunday, January 15: Business meeting. Come and help keep SBWN up and running!

Sunday, February 5: Tattoos, Piercings and Scars. Share thoughts about and experiences with body modification. Like it? Love it? Hate it? Tell us why! Sure to be a fun topic.

Sunday, February 19: Open Rap, Potluck: An opportunity to chat and socialize with other SBWN members.

Sunday, March 5: Vagina Bi-alogues. Come have a semi-private discussion about our privates. If your vagina could talk, what would it say? If it could go out, what would it wear?

Local Groups

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network
PO Box 30645; Seattle, WA 98113-0645.
http://www.geocities.com/sbwn/
E-mail: sbwn@hotmail.com

Seattle LGBT Community Center
The Center's mission is to create a meeting place for the LGBT community to grow together, increase public understanding, and celebrate our diversity.
1115 East Pike Street
(206) 323-LGBT (5428)
http://www.seattlelgbt.org

Polyfidelity Discussion Group
Support group and community for people in or interested in multipartner relationships. Discussions and literature on responsible non-monogamy, intimate networks, alternative relationships and community. Bi-monthly potluck discussions are held at 5:30 pm at the SPCC (Sex Positive Community Center, aka "The Wet Spot"). 1630 15th Ave W., Seattle, WA. (206) 728-4533.
http://www.scn.org/~spg/index.html

BiNet Seattle
BiNet Seattle is a bisexual non-profit, mixed gender, social and support organization created to foster a visible community for bisexual, bi-curious people, and their partners in the Puget Sound area. http://www.binetseattle.org

Fridays 7:30-9pm: Discussion / Support group meetings for bisexual and bi-curious men and women, their partners and other bi-friendly folk at the Seattle LGBT Community Center.

Lesbian Resource Center
A community–based organization committed to advancing the status of lesbians by combating oppression and promoting empowerment, visibility, and social change. (206) 322-3953.
http://www.lrc.net

Seattle
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1115 East Pike Street, Seattle, WA 98122 - 206.323.LGBT (5428)
info@SeattleLGBT.org - Open 7 days a week, Noon to 9 pm